

Mr. Pitts, in addition to being a mineralogist and a judge of good food, is an octogenarian — we shall not go any higher than this because it is too hard to spell. On this recent trip he fell right into stride and maintained the pace he set for himself five or six decades ago when he was a traveling man for a pharmaceutical company. His return from Florida involved six weeks and seventeen stop-overs. His first stop was at Nashville, Tennessee, where he visited his grandnephew and namesake, William B. Pitts, who is a medical student at Vanderbilt University. His other stops included (without limitation, as attorneys say), New Orleans, Galveston, Phoenix, Indio, Desert Palms, and Palm Springs. Everywhere he stopped he visited with fellow mineralogists, and at Desert Palms he attended a meeting of 7,000 mineralogists and rock collectors, most of whom know him as "Uncle Billy."

Welcome home, Mr. Pitts. Everyone feels happy and comfortable when you are back in your laboratory that has produced so many wonderfully cut and polished specimens of gem minerals. Once again the wheels are turning..

NEW MEMBERS

THE FOLLOWING MEMBERS were elected by the Council at its meeting of February 14, 1952:

Regular Membership

Mr. Gordon T. Atkinson
Miss Elizabeth M. Austin
Mr. Louis C. Belden
Dr. Carl B. Bowen
Mr. Sewall S. Brown
Miss Jane Bramel
Mrs. Walter G. Brendel
Miss Caroline Burckhardt
Dr. Ernest D. Clark
Mr. Roy E. Coy
Mr. Bruce F. Crane
Mr. Dewey Donnell
Mr. Roy H. Elliott
Mrs. B. C. Floyd
Mr. Laurent Guiguet
Mr. Edward C. Henshaw
Mr. Neil F. Hildebrand
Dr. Michael J. Hogan
Mr. F. C. Hoyt
Mrs. Marie Koenen
Mr. L. R. Leinbach
Dr. Howard R. Parker

Mrs. Janet R. Pratt
Mr. E. W. Steele
Mr. H. R. Swasey
Dr. Edward B. Towne
Miss Marjorie Van Scyoc
Mr. Robert Von Hein
Mr. A. D. Williams

Family Membership

Mr. Louis A. Crawford
Mrs. Albert M. Kirk, Jr.
Mr. George H. Koerner

Annual Sponsor

Mrs. T. S. Petersen

Student Membership

Michael Doherty
Paul Fireman
Douglas King
Jerry Lawrence
Jim Lilienthal
Neil Lynch
Phillip Michels

ACADEMY NEWS LETTER

NUMBER 147

MARCH, 1952



IMPORTANT INCUNABLE

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Published Monthly by

CALIFORNIA ACADEMY OF SCIENCES

GOLDEN GATE PARK • SAN FRANCISCO

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March Announcement

THE REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING of the California Academy of Sciences will be held in the Morrison Auditorium of the Academy's Hall of Science, Golden Gate Park, on Wednesday evening, March 19, 1952, at 8 o'clock. Dr. Henry H. Hart, noted San Francisco scholar will lecture on the topic

VENETIAN ADVENTURER: THE LIFE AND TIMES OF MARCO POLO

Dr. Hart, leading authority on history's greatest traveller, is bringing with him a display of some of the notable items in his collection including the hand-colored frontispiece from the first printed edition of *The Adventures of Messer Marco Polo*, Nuremberg, 1477.

Marco Polo has excited the imagination of man since his book first appeared in manuscript form in 1298 on his return from a twenty-five year trip to China and other areas of the Far East. Among Dr. Hart's manifold treasures which he will use to illustrate his lecture are translations of the great work into many languages — Chinese, Swedish, Italian, and the famous Pepino Latin translation, the edition that was used by Christopher Columbus two centuries after the work had first appeared.

The many-colored tapestry of medieval life is revealed in new detail by Dr. Hart's research into the life and times of Marco Polo. Marco's own book, newly discovered documents, and contemporary chronicles, as well as research in Venice and elsewhere in Europe, have all gone into making this lecture an outstanding attraction at the Academy.

ACADEMY CURATOR HONORED

JOSEPH SLEVIN, Curator of the Department of Herpetology in the California Academy of Sciences and a leading authority on the Galápagos Islands, has received an especially heart-warming honor. The village of Berlanga, Spain, is this year commemorating the 400th anniversary of the death of Fray Tomás de Berlanga, discoverer of the Galápagos Islands. The committee in charge of the occasion has elected Mr. Slevin Honorary President of the Quadricentennial Observance. He has been so notified by Padre Emilio del Sol, the village priest of Berlanga.

Fray Tomás discovered the Galápagos Islands in 1535, while he was Bishop

of Panama. On a voyage to Peru, he was becalmed six days and drifted to a hitherto unknown group of islands, where he made a landing in the hope of finding water. Instead, he found seals, iguanas, and "such big tortoises that each could carry a man on top of itself." From these last, the islands took their name, "galápagos" being the Spanish word for tortoise.

Not wishing to leave Bishop Tomás high and dry in the Galápagos, we shall briefly state that he and his crew finally found enough water to fill a few barrels, and eventually reached their destination after considerable hardship. He reported his discovery of the islands in a letter to the King of Spain.

Mr. Slevin's acquaintance with the Galápagos began in 1905, after a voyage of nearly three months from San Francisco in the schooner *Academy*, an 89-foot sailing vessel without auxiliary power. He and his fellow-members of the expedition remained in the islands an entire year, making the most complete scientific survey that has ever been made of this uniquely interesting island group. In the subsequent years Mr. Slevin has also made a very complete study of the history of the islands from the time of their discovery down to the present. To be honored now by the citizens of Berlanga, Spain, the birthplace of Bishop Tomás, is a fitting recognition of a continuing interest in the Galápagos that has spanned nearly half a century.

HAPPY TRAVELER RETURNS

MR. WILLIAM B. PITTS, Honorary Curator of Gem Minerals in the California Academy of Sciences, returned on March 3 from his annual trip to Florida. This will be good news to his thousands of friends in the Bay Region.

Mr. Pitts' annual winter trip to Florida is something of which California chambers of commerce might take a dim view, and something of which Florida chambers of commerce might make quite an item if they were on their toes. He has relatives in Florida, he has friends there, and he claims to like the fishing. It is our personal view that he has a nostalgia, stemming from his boyhood, for hominy grits, southern fried chicken and black-eyed peas.

One thing he always brings back with him is a Georgia ham. Why Georgia hams should taste better than Virginia hams we have no way of knowing; and why they should taste better than California hams is another matter we shall not go into (our impression is that California hams — while all right in their own right — come from a different section of the hog). Anyway, Mr. Pitts comes back every year from the southeastern United States with a large section of southeastern pork in his possession, and he finds the best chef in the Bay Region, and thereafter deals out this delectable delicacy to his friends in generous proportions, saying all the while in a casual, deprecatory fashion, "Oh, this is nothing — nothing at all. Where I was raised we had this every day!"